

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of:

Adam J. Canni et al.

Group Art Unit: 3612

Serial No.: 10/758,563

Examiner: Gregory A. Blankenship

Filed: January 15, 2004

For: OVERHEAD CONSOLE FOR A VEHICLE

Attorney Docket No.: LEAR 0660 R

SUPPLEMENTAL AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

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Sir:

In response to the Interview Summary mailed October 23, 2006, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Issued Claim) An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for a vehicle comprising:

a headliner including a structural member;

a first console housing disposed on the structural member of the headliner;

a second console housing disposed on the structural member of the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;

a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including at least one securement surface, each of the at least one securement surface forming only an outer surface of the center console housing; and

at least one accessory module selectively positionable on and removably secured to the at least one securement surface of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain materials within and at least one securing member engaging the at least one securement surface of the center console housing.

2. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1, wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail and an inner surface forming a cavity.

3. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 2, wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

4. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 2, wherein each of the rails is generally cylindrical in shape.

5. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 2, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having opposite ends, and the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module comprises a gripping portion extending from each end of the lower surface, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

6. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 2, wherein each rail is generally cylindrical in shape, and each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

7. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1, wherein the structural member of the headliner has a lower surface, and wherein the center console housing comprises an upper surface substantially flush to the lower surface of the structural member of the headliner, a pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface between the first and second console housings, and a cavity defined therebetween.

8. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 7, wherein the upper surface and the pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface of the center console housing are integrally formed with the structural member of the headliner.

9. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 8, wherein the first console housing and center console housing are integrally formed as part of the structural member of the headliner.

10. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 7, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is an overlay placed over the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner.

11. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 7, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module secured in the center console housing further comprises an upper surface including the at least one securing member, a lower surface

forming the storage area and an overlapping flap portion extending from the lower surface, wherein the overlapping flap portion is removably fastened to the lower surface to enclose the storage area.

12. (Issued Claim) An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a headliner, the headliner including a structural member having a lower surface, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a first console housing disposable on the lower surface of the structural member;

a second console housing disposable on the lower surface of the structural member in spaced relationship with the first console housing;

a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, wherein the center console housing includes at least one generally cylindrical rail extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, the at least one rail having an outer surface; and

at least one accessory module selectively positionable along and removably secured to the at least one rail of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain the materials and at least one securing member engaging the at least one rail only at the outer surface of the at least one rail.

13. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 12, wherein the at least one rail of the center console housing comprises a pair of generally cylindrical, spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each rail includes a securing surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail and an inner surface forming a cavity.

14. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 13, wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

15. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 13, wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having opposite ends, and the at least one securing member of the least one accessory module comprises a gripping portion extending from each end of the lower surface, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

16. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 15, wherein each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

17. (Amended) An overhead console assembly for a vehicle comprising: a first console housing disposed on an inner surface of a structural member of a headliner of the vehicle;

a second console housing disposed on the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;

a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, wherein the center console housing comprises an upper surface substantially flush to the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner, a pair of sidewalls extending vertically from the upper surface between the first and second console housings, a cavity defined there between, and at least one securement surface disposed within the cavity; and

at least one accessory module selectively positioned and removably secured in the center console housing, the at least one module comprising a lower surface, an overlapping flap portion extending from the lower surface, a storage area formed between the lower surface and flap portion and an upper surface having at least one securing member attached thereto for securing the at least one module in the center console housing.

18. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 17, wherein the first console housing and center console housing are integrally formed as part of the structural member of the headliner.

19. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 17, wherein the overlapping flap portion of the at least one accessory module is removably fastened to the lower surface of the at least one module to enclose the storage area.

20. (Issued Claim) The overhead console of claim 17, wherein the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module is a hook and loop fastening panel secured to the upper surface of the at least one module.

21. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 20, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is an overlay placed over the inner surface of the structural member of the headliner.

22. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 20, wherein the at least one securement surface of the center console housing is a hook and loop fastening panel secured within the cavity of the center console housing.

23. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises at least one rail having a longitudinally extending securement surface disposed at an outer periphery of the at least one rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the at least one rail, and the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module removably engages the at least one rail only at the securement surface.

24. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1 wherein the at least one rail comprises polymeric material.

25. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, each rail having a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the rail, the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module

includes two securing members that engage the rails only at the securement surfaces so as to removably secure the at least one accessory module to the rails, and the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

26. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 1 wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, each rail having a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail such that the securement surface forms only an outer surface of the rail, the at least one securing member of the at least one accessory module includes two securing members that engage the rails only at the securement surfaces so as to removably secure the at least one accessory module to the rails, and the storage area of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

27. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises polymeric material.

28. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises two spaced apart rails, and the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

29. (Issued Claim) The overhead console assembly of claim 12 wherein the at least one rail comprises two rails, and the storage area of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

30. (Issued Claim) An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for use with a vehicle, the combination comprising:

a headliner;

a first console housing disposed on the headliner;

a second console housing disposed on the headliner, wherein the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;

a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including a pair of spaced apart rails extending between and secured to the first and second console housings, wherein each of the rails includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery and an inner surface forming a cavity; and

at least one accessory module selectively positionable on and removably secured to the securement surfaces of the center console housing for storing materials, the at least one accessory module including a housing, a storage area defined within the housing to retain materials, and at least one securing member engaging the securement surfaces of the center console housing.

31. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein the rails are formed of extruded aluminum.

32. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein each of the rails is generally cylindrical in shape.

33. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes a lower surface having first and second ends, and the at least one securing member of the least one accessory module includes first and second gripping portions, the first gripping portion extending from the first end, and the second gripping portion extending from the second end, each gripping portion engaging the securement surface of a respective rail.

34. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 33 wherein each rail is generally cylindrical in shape, and each gripping portion is arcuately shaped.

35. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein the rails comprise polymeric material.

36. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein the housing of the at least one accessory module includes two vertically extending side walls disposed between the rails, the side walls defining the storage area of the at least one accessory module.

37. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 30 wherein the storage area of the at least one accessory module is disposed entirely between the two rails when the at least one accessory module is secured to the rails.

38. (Issued Claim) An overhead console assembly and headliner combination for use with a vehicle, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a headliner;

a first console housing disposed on the headliner;

a second console housing disposed on the headliner and spaced apart from the first console housing;

a center console housing disposed between the first and second console housings, the center console housing including two spaced apart rails extending between the first and second console housings; and

an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the rails, the module including a housing having vertically extending side walls that extend between the rails when the module is secured to the rails, the side walls defining a storage receptacle.

39. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 38 wherein the storage receptacle is disposed entirely between the rails when the module is secured to the rails.

40. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 38 wherein each rail has a generally cylindrical shape, and wherein the housing of the module includes a lower surface having first and second ends, the module further comprising first and second arcuately shaped gripping portions respectively extending from the first and second ends, each gripping portion being engageable with a respective rail.

41. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 38 wherein the rails are formed of polymeric material.

42. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 38 wherein each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail, and an inner cavity, and wherein the module includes two securing members, each securing member being engageable with a respective securement surface.

43. (Issued Claim) The combination of claim 42 wherein when the securing members are engaged with the securement surfaces, the securing members do not extend into the cavities.

44. (New) An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a roof, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a first console housing mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof;
a second console housing mountable in the vehicle such that the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;

two spaced apart rails mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof, wherein the rails extend between the first and second console housings when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle; and

an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the rails such that the module extends between the rails when the module is secured to the rails, wherein the module is removable from the rails and repositionable along the rails by a vehicle occupant when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

45. (Cancelled)

46. (New) The assembly of claim 44 wherein the first and second console housings are configured to be disposed on a headliner of the vehicle when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

47. (New) The assembly of claim 44 further comprising a headliner that is mountable in the vehicle adjacent the roof, wherein the first and second console housings are disposed on the headliner when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

48. (New) The assembly of claim 47 wherein the first and second console housings are integrally formed with the headliner.

49. (New) The assembly of claim 44 further comprising an electrically powered device associated with the second console housing, and electrical wiring associated with one of the rails for providing electrical power to the electrically powered device.

50. (New) The assembly of claim 49 wherein the electrical wiring extends along the one rail.

51. (New) The assembly of claim 49 wherein the electrical wiring extends through the one rail.

52. (New) The assembly of claim 49 wherein the second console housing is located rearward of the first console housing when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

53. (New) The assembly of claim 44 wherein the module includes walls that extend between the rails when the module is secured to the rails, the walls cooperating to define a storage receptacle.

54. (New) The assembly of claim 44 wherein the module defines a storage receptacle that is disposed entirely between the rails when the module is secured to the rails.

55. (New) The assembly of claim 44 wherein the rails are configured to extend longitudinally in the vehicle when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle, and the module is longitudinally positionable along the rails.

56. (New) An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a roof, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a first console housing mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof;

a second console housing mountable in the vehicle such that the second console housing is spaced apart from the first console housing;

a center console housing mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof, such that the center console housing is disposed between the first and second console housings when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle, the center console housing including at least one securing surface, each of the at least one securing surface forming only an outer surface of the center console housing; and

an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the at least one securing surface of the center console housing, the module including at least one securing member that is selectively engageable with the at least one securing surface of the center console housing, wherein the module is removable from the at least one securing surface and repositionable along the at least one securing surface by a vehicle occupant when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

57. (Cancelled)

58. (New) The assembly of claim 56 further comprising an electrically powered device associated with the second console housing, and electrical wiring associated with the center console housing for providing electrical power to the electrically powered device.

59. (New) The assembly of claim 56 wherein the first and second console housings are configured to be disposed on a headliner of the vehicle when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

60. (New) The assembly of claim 56 further comprising a headliner that is mountable in the vehicle, the headliner including an overlay that defines the at least one securement surface, and wherein the first and second console housings are disposed on the headliner when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle.

61. (New) The assembly of claim 56 wherein the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, and each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail.

62. (New) The assembly of claim 61 wherein the at least one securing member comprises two gripping portions, each gripping portion being engageable with the securement surface of a respective rail.

63. (New) The assembly of claim 56 wherein the center console housing includes a pair of sidewalls that define a cavity for receiving the module.

64. (New) An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a roof, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a console housing mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof, the console housing including at least one securement surface; and

an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the at least one securement surface of the console housing, the module including at least one securing member that is selectively engageable with the at least one securement surface of the console housing, wherein the module is removable from the at least one securement surface and repositionable along the at least one securement surface by a vehicle occupant when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle;

wherein the at least one securement surface and the at least one securing member comprise a hook and loop fastening system.

65. (New) The assembly of claim 56 wherein the module is longitudinally positionable along the at least one securement surface.

66. (New) An overhead console assembly for use with a vehicle having a roof, the overhead console assembly comprising:

a console housing mountable in the vehicle proximate the roof, the console housing including at least one securement surface; and

an accessory module selectively positionable on and removably securable to the at least one securement surface of the console housing, the module including at least one securing member that is selectively engageable with the at least one securement surface of the console housing, wherein the module is removable from the at least one securement surface and repositionable along the at least one securement surface by a vehicle occupant when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle, and wherein the module includes an upper surface that includes the at least one securing member, a lower surface, a storage area disposed between the upper and lower surfaces, and a flap portion that is configured to overlap the lower surface to enclose the storage area.

67. (New) The assembly of claim 64 wherein each of the at least one securement surface forms only an outer surface of the console housing.

68. (New) The assembly of claim 66 wherein each of the at least one securement surface forms only an outer surface of the console housing.

69. (Canceled)

Remarks

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Interview granted on October 16, 2006.

Claims 1-44, 46-56 and 58-68 are currently pending in the application. As requested by the Examiner during the Interview, this Amendment is being filed to show claim 1 in its issued form including corrections made by the Certificate of Correction dated October 7, 2003. An explanation of the support in the Specification for all changes to the original patent claims and all new claims is also provided below, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.173(c).

Furthermore, Applicants are pursuing a Supplemental Declaration as requested by the Examiner during the Interview.

Basis in The Specification for Changes to Original Claims and New Claims

Claim 17 is an original claim that has been amended to include a comma in line 14 of that claim. Because the amendment to claim 17 relates to correction of a typographical error, it is believed to be unnecessary to provide basis in the specification for the change.

New claims 44, 46-56 and 58-68 are fully supported by the Specification of the issued patent. For example, all limitations of independent claims 44, 56, 64 and 66 are disclosed in column 3, line 27, through column 7, line 63, and/or in the drawings. Furthermore, independent claims 44 and 56 generally correspond to issued claims 38 and 1, respectively, but the new claims more broadly recite, at least in part, that which Applicants regard as the subject matter of their invention.

Dependent claims 46 and 59, which each recite that "the first and second console housings are configured to be disposed on a headliner of the vehicle when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle," are supported by column 3, line 65, through column 4, line 1, for example. Similarly, claim 47, which recites that the assembly further comprises a headliner

and that "the first and second console housings are disposed on the headliner when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle," finds support in the same section of the specification.

Dependent claims 49-51 and 58, which include "electrical wiring associated with one of the rails," find support in column 5, lines 19-24. The recitation in claim 52 that "the second console housing is located rearward of the first console housing when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle" is supported by column 4, lines 19-22 of the Specification.

Dependent claim 53, which recites that "the module includes walls that extend between the rails when the module is secured to the rails, the walls cooperating to define a storage receptacle," is supported by Figures 1 and 2, for example. Likewise, the recitation in claim 54 that "the module defines a storage receptacle that is disposed entirely between the rails when the module is secured to the rails" is supported by Figures 1 and 2. Furthermore, claim 55, which recites that "the rails are configured to extend longitudinally in the vehicle when the assembly is mounted in the vehicle, and the module is longitudinally positionable along the rails," is supported by column 4, line 66, through column 5, line 2, and Figure 1, for example.

Dependent claim 60, which recites that the assembly comprises a headliner that includes "an overlay that defines the at least one securement surface," is supported by column 7, lines 49-51. Dependent claim 61, which recites that "the center console housing comprises a pair of spaced apart rails, and each rail includes a securement surface disposed about an outer periphery of the rail," is supported by column 5, lines 17-19.

The recitation in dependent claim 62 that "the at least one securing member comprises two gripping portions, each gripping portion being engageable with the securement surface of a respective rail," finds support at column 5, lines 40-44. Furthermore, the recitation in dependent claim 63 that "the center console housing includes a pair of sidewalls that define a cavity for receiving the module" is supported by column 6, lines 55-63.

Independent claims 64 and 66 were introduced as dependent claims of claim 56, and were rewritten in independent form during prosecution. The recitation in claim 64 that "the at least one securement surface and the at least one securing member comprise a hook and loop fastening system" is supported in the specification at column 6, lines 58-63, and column 7, lines 40-58 for example. The recitation in claim 66 that "the module includes an upper surface that includes the at least one securing member, a lower surface, a storage area disposed between the upper and lower surfaces, and a flap portion that is configured to overlap the lower surface to enclose the storage area" is supported in the specification at column 7, lines 17-24, and Figures 3-4.

Dependent claim 65, which depends from claim 56 and recites that "the module is longitudinally positionable along the at least one securement surface," finds support at column 4, line 66, through column 5, line 2, for example.

Dependent claims 67 and 68, which each recite that "each of the at least one securement surface forms only an outer surface of the console housing," are supported by Figure 3, for example.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each of the Examiner's objections in advancing the prosecution of this case. As noted above, a Supplemental Declaration is currently being pursued, and will be forwarded upon execution. If any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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